

TO : The Secretary
THROUGH: S/S
FROM : INR - Thomas L. Hughes

INTELLIGENCE NOTE: KHRUSHCHEV PREPARES FOR A LONG GAME IN CUBA
CRISIS

Khrushchev's remarks to Western newsmen at a Kremlin reception today suggest that he foresees a protracted period of pulling and hauling before a settlement of the Cuban crisis. His remarks have not been reported by Soviet media and may, as on occasion in the past, be intended only for foreign consumption.

Confidence in Non-Invasion Guarantee. Khrushchev stated that while Cuban leaders did not believe the President's promise not to invade Cuba, he did, and further that he had assured the Cubans that if the President did not keep his word it would mean war. Thus, Khrushchev gives the impression of believing that it is now safe for him to offer the Cubans a commitment which Moscow has -- at least in public -- avoided giving.

Tension Reduced. While putting on a show of buoyant self-confidence for the benefit of the foreign press, Khrushchev said that his "forty missiles are "probably" -- he used the vague word in this connection -- en route home. He said the world is no longer at the "edge of the precipice of nuclear war" -- an unusually Dullesian formulation for the Soviet Premier, though the general theme of how close to war the world would have been if not for Soviet forbearance has been a feature of recent Soviet pronouncements.

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Summit No Longer Needed. Evidently aware that the US would not be likely to agree to a summit meeting as long as the Cuban situation remained unresolved, Khrushchev now professes to see no urgent need for one. In the present, he thus absolves himself from even the tentative commitment to a meeting implied in his October 24 letter to Bertrand Russell. Nevertheless, Khrushchev continues to hold open the prospect of an agreement on a nuclear test ban as a result of "tete-a-tete" talks with the US. But, as was true of earlier indications of optimism about a test ban, he gives no indication that the Soviet Union may be prepared to accept an obligation to permit on-site inspection.

Soviet Tests. While announcing that the present Soviet series will end on November 20 (the previously announced date for the end of maneuvers, i.e. testing, at Novaya Zemlya), he states that the USSR will continue preparing further tests, and would carry them out in the absence of agreement. He thus seems to rule out a unilateral Soviet moratorium gambit.

Berlin in Abeyance. Khrushchev refrains from saying anything of substance about Berlin. He does state that the problem "is assuming greater acuteness," -- the first time such a note of urgency has been introduced since the Cuban crisis -- but gives no indication of what action he might take and pointedly avoids setting any deadline for either the start or finish of negotiations on the subject.

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